



Round Table Topic Descriptions

SLCP Project Director Meeting

August 14-15, 2008

Session 2

3:35 – 4:15 PM

Ready, Set, Stay in School: Implementing an Effective Advisory Program

Potomac Ballroom Salon A

Starr Herrman, Project Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools, Tennessee

Advisories are the nation's #1 dropout prevention tool with proper implementation. The "relationships" piece of Rigor, Relevance and Relationships needs to be a priority. Learn the "real story" for making your students, faculty, and entire campus rank advisory as a non-negotiable part of a student's school experience. Join us as we share our successes and our lessons learned in this journey in Metro Nashville Public Schools.

Our implementation plan covers:

- Administrative Support/Faculty Buy-In
- Organization and Structure in Ninth Grade Advisories and in Advisories 9-12
- Professional Development
- Continuous Improvement

Discussions Questions:

1. How can I get administrators to understand and want to make this commitment?
2. What supports are needed by the project director to develop the organization and structure?
3. What type of professional development is necessary?
4. How do you assess effective implementation?
5. How do you assess student outcomes?

Dual Credit: Program Building and Partnership Development Strategies

Potomac Ballroom Salon A

Mary Meier, SLC Program Director, Waterloo Community School District, Waterloo, Iowa

Two of the objectives of our grant are to provide rigor and a smooth transition from high school to "career and life." "Our high schools have begun the emphasis on a career focus for all students. We have been able to establish a number of dual credit courses with area post-secondary institutions, and wish to further develop the offerings and increase the non-majority enrollment in the classes.

- Quarterly planning meetings with area post-secondary institutions and high schools
- Piloting courses at a single high school before full implementation.
- Professional development for staff regarding dual enrollment
- Multiple ways to focus students on a career focus
- Students identified and recruited to participate in rigorous courses
- Many communication methods to reach staff, students, and parents
- Beginning information about dual enrollment at the middle level

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- Use of technology
- Parent initiatives to emphasize role of dual enrollment
- Financial assistance
- Support systems for dual enrolled students

Discussion Questions:

1. What was the process to begin offering dual credit classes?
2. What are the current offerings and how will the program expand?
3. How is communication maintained between teachers and institutions?
4. What were some of the challenges to overcome?
5. What training will be necessary to help teachers increase their knowledge of dual credit classes?
6. How are English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and underrepresented students counseled into and supported to be successful in highly rigorous dual credit coursework?
7. How will data be utilized to measure the success of the dual credit enrollment?

**Developing SLC Programs of Study that
Accelerate/Elevate Academic Achievement and
Ensure Post Secondary Success**

Potomac Ballroom Salon C

Edward Spikes, Chicago Public Schools (CPS), Chicago, Illinois

In 2005, our office required all CPS SLC high schools to implement Freshman Academies and develop a program of study for freshman and a three-year program of study for all other SLCs. Schools were required to develop programs of study that offered four years of math/science or at least one of the two. Schools were required to evaluate their course offerings to ensure that seniors were not provided with the least path of resistance to graduate. Research and data collected by our office indicated too many CPS graduates especially African American and Hispanic students were not prepared for their first year in college.

CPS SLC Programs of Study

- AVID or Freshman Seminar
- Summer Accelerated Courses
- Four Years Math/Science
- Four Years World Language
- Thematic Focus with emphasis on Honors and A.P.

Discussion Questions:

1. How do we ensure that there is equity in each of your SLCs?
2. What strategies can you use to increase rigor in your SLC?
3. How do you measure if your SLC curriculum is effectively preparing students for post secondary education?
4. How do you define rigor at your school and is the definition consistently applied with the entire faculty?
5. What strategies can you use to change your school culture to student centered?



Implementing Pre-Advanced Placement Professional Development and Program Strategies

Potomac Ballroom Salon C

Jeanne Paynter, Ed.D., Maryland State Department of Education

Key tenets of high school reform include having high expectations for all students regardless of their past academic performance, removing barriers to student participation in college preparatory courses, and motivating more students to take and succeed in rigorous course work. One approach to achieving these goals is the integration of "Pre-AP" instructional strategies in grades 6 - 10. The College Board defines Pre-AP as "a suite of professional development resources" designed to equip middle and high school teachers with the strategies and tools to engage students in active, high-level learning. Our Advanced Placement Incentive Program grant, *Project NEXUS*, incorporated Pre-AP professional development and curriculum alignment strategies to increase academic rigor without causing the onset of *rigor mortis*.

Discussion Questions:

1. What instructional approaches are effective in promoting academic rigor while stimulating student engagement in learning?
2. In what ways can barriers to student participation and success in college preparatory coursework be identified and overcome?
3. What is the role of teacher vertical teams in aligning curriculum and instruction with college-level (AP) standards?
4. How can professional development be designed, implemented, and evaluated to support the implementation of Pre-AP strategies in the classroom?

Working Together to Track Progress Across Multiple Initiatives: Data Utilization Guide (D.U.G.)

Potomac Ballroom Salon D

Joseph Bellonte, SLC Program Director, Niagara Falls High School, Niagara Falls City School District, Niagara Falls, New York

Mary Rosenthal, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, Oregon

Focus: The challenge of utilizing and collecting data in a large urban high school with a high poverty rate means that there are many initiatives and grants functioning at the same time. Niagara Falls created a document that allowed the administration and project director to cross territorial lines and create the "who" in terms of getting our arrows pointing in the same direction toward our common goals and objectives. Additional practitioner resources will be highlighted from current SLCP technical assistance resources.

Process: Niagara aligned our goals with milestones and then identified key personnel, or the "go to" person, that would be responsible for key initiatives ensuring that we are provide services to all populations.

Useful functions of using the D.U.G. document:

- Organizes objectives in a manageable attainable process
- Identifies key personnel towards attaining goals and objectives
- Is a living document that grows and changes as we do
- Is a useful tool when there is a personnel change or change in leadership so we do not lose momentum



Discussion Questions:

1. What processes do you use for Leadership team or other meetings in your school(s) and/or district to open lines of communication that foster collaboration vs. territorialism across various programs, initiatives and funding streams?
2. How do you make getting buy in from senior leadership a priority when many are so busy putting out fires?
3. How difficult or what obstacles, if any, have you had in obtaining information from your Information Systems (IS) department or staff to aide you in gaining pertinent data?
4. What, if any, successes or pitfalls have you had in working with your third party evaluator with regards to obtaining information that would be used in the SLCP Annual Performance Report (APR)?

SLCs & CTE: District and School Working Together

Potomac Ballroom Salon D

Angie Grasberger, SLC Project Manager, Manatee County School District, Bradenton, Florida

As Project Manager, I work with administrators of six high schools to build understanding of small learning communities, CTE and career academies, and how they all fit together. An additional support is the team of 6 Academic Advisors and 6 Career Advisors who work directly with the students, parents and staff members.

Strategies:

- Define the role of the SLC project manager and collaborate with high school administrators
- Assist the high school in assessing the needs of the school staff and students
- Guide Academic and Career Advisors in each of the six high schools who:
 - Participate on the school leadership team
 - Work with students, parents & teacher teams
 - Track data
 - Collaborate with the feeder schools for effective transition including education and career planning

Goals & Challenges of our Grant:

- Creation of SLCs at each of the six high schools included in the Cohort 7 Implementation Grant so that all students participate in some type of SLC
- Convincing administrators, guidance and teachers that what we are creating is in the best interests of our students
- Collaboration with the high school administrators to ensure that the strategies incorporated are part of the individual school improvement plan
- Determining the needs of the community as a guide to the selection of career pathways to be incorporated in the SLCs
- Providing the staff development needed to move toward SLCs within our high schools
- Collaboration with our middle schools and post-secondary institutions

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you convince administrators, guidance and teachers that what we are creating is in the best interests of our students?
2. How do you determine the types of SLCs that you want and/or need to create?

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3. What kinds of staff development options are needed and how do you provide them in order to build successful small learning communities and/or career academies?
4. What are the Career Academy National Standards of Practice and why were they developed?
5. How do you collaborate with the middle schools and post-secondary institutions?

Using SLCs to Connect Academic and Career

Potomac Ballroom Salon D

Instruction for Student Success

Dr. Wanda Gilliard, SLC Program Director, DeKalb County Schools, Decatur, Georgia

Tisa Parker, SLC Coordinator, DeKalb County Schools, Decatur, Georgia

The mission of the career academy program in the DeKalb County School System is to provide students with a sense of belonging and the opportunity to explore their interests and aptitudes while receiving a solid foundation in academics. Additionally, we provide students with the academics and career-focused electives to graduate with a concentration in humanities, math/science, or career technology in order to show the connection between academic courses and careers in the real world.

Main Focus

- Academic Teaming
- Teacher Advisement
- Student Internships
- Advisory Councils
- Senior Projects

Challenges

- Scheduling
- Staffing
- Integration
- Corporate Partnerships
- Leadership turnover

Discussion Questions:

1. What career academies are you currently implementing?
2. How did you establish buy-in from your teachers?
3. What type of training/staff development did you provide your teachers to help them to increase collaboration across the curriculum?
4. What strategies are used to motivate students to take more rigorous courses?
5. How does your career academies aid in your schools meeting Annual Yearly Progress?

Building Your SLC One P.I.E.C.E.© at a Time:

Francis Scott Key Salon A

Successful Implementation of Your SLC and its Schedule

Chris Russo, SLC Project Director, Monticello High School, Monticello, New York

Planning, Implementing, Evaluating, Communicating, and Evolving (P.I.E.C.E.©) your SLC program. P.I.E.C.E. is a simple method to help you design and sustain SLC programs at your school. Monticello HS is committed to building and maintaining SLCs. Successful student and teacher scheduling is a key factor in creating an environment for the development of meaningful relationships among teachers and students. Providing a specific set of teachers with a particular group of students has been at the heart of our SLC schedule. As we roll out our upper school academies, we are creating academy specific pathways towards graduation and increasing the opportunity for students to participate in college level courses through our partnerships with Rochester Institute of Technology, Syracuse University, and Sullivan County Community College.



Our SLC teams/schedule is supported by

- Cohort/Academy/Team Purity
- Common Planning Time for Teachers
- Academic Focus for Freshmen
- Flexible Schedule and Separate Location for Freshmen (core classes)
- New Curriculum Bulletin

Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the roadblocks you are facing in creating your schedule?
2. What is your number one priority in creating your SLC schedule?
3. What are some effective strategies in creating your SLC schedule?

AP: Increasing Rigor & Changing Culture

Francis Scott Key Salon A

Jacqueline Rivera- Fromkin, SLC Program Director/ Vice Principal, Passaic School District, Passaic, New Jersey

Goals and Challenges of our Grant:

Our school, with the help of the Advanced Placement Incentive grant, has had a chance to improve our instruction by increasing academic rigor and expectations across the curriculum. We have been able to promote a post-secondary education culture in the home and in the school. We have formed partnerships with Southern Regional Education Board/ High Schools that Work, the College Board/ Princeton Review, and the Academy for Educational Development. Our staff members are also redesigning curriculum, developing formative assessments, determining common grading policies and have attended professional development workshops on vertical articulation with weekly coaching visits.

Our Strategies: Our incoming freshmen are supported with targeted strategies that include:

- Daily tutoring in Math and English courses as well as after school for AP courses
- Collaboration and transition activities with the parents and community partnership
- History and Robotics Enrichment academies with increased access to instructional technology
- College Awareness Saturday and After school programs with visits to universities

Discussion Questions

1. What strategies can change the instructional culture of a school so that teachers take on the challenging work of increasing the number of courses that will challenge students?
2. When a high school is committed to making significant changes in course rigor, what concrete steps help the staff move in that direction & evaluate its progress?
3. What professional development is required to help teachers gain the skills they will need to increase the rigor in their classrooms?
4. How are English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and under-represented students counseled into and supported to be successful in highly rigorous coursework?



**Ready Or Not, Here They Come:
Helping Freshmen Find Success in Algebra I**

Francis Scott Key Salon B

Kristine Belcher, SLCP Project Director, Herbert Hoover High School, Fresno, California

Our Strategies:

- Identify academic and behavioral interventions for freshmen, but specifically focus on mathematics achievement. Include tools to move students to achieving grade level mathematics proficiency.
- Identify an instructional lead teacher and provide pay from the site level budget
- Algebra and companion classes were kept at class size reduction sizes (22:1) and used site level staffing
- Double intervention periods (back to back). Don't split the classes over lunch & the same teacher needs to teach both sections
- 1st semester NO ALGEBRA class. Double periods are used for remediating during the first semester and algebra is offered second semester as a double period with the SAME teacher
- Department preps are common for the intervention teachers
- The focus has to be on what is best for students
- Staffing to support - making that work at the site level
- Supporting class size reduction in house (without extra staffing)

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the project director's role in structuring interventions?
2. How do you promote second order change without it being considered "top down" decision making?
3. How can you utilize existing resources to support a successful math intervention program for freshmen success?
4. How do you get the right people "on the bus"?

Service Learning Communities and Creative Scheduling

Francis Scott Key Salon B

Dan Kovalak, SLC Coordinator, Maple Heights City Schools, Maple Heights, Ohio

Maple Heights constructed three SLCs which offer similar experiences for students in grades 10-12 without making any one SLC less academically rigorous than another. We base our SLCs around the idea of service learning. Each SLC has a service learning focus to differentiate itself the others.

SLC scheduling has its own interesting challenges many of which will force a school to make some important choices. Being creative and using resources in an effective way is crucial in developing a proper SLC schedule. I will discuss our experiences with various schedules including block, modified block, modes, and straight seven. Our experiences brought us to institute a unique schedule that will include two 80 day semesters and one 20 day semester used for service learning, credit recovery, and learning enhancement. Making use of time is one of the most important factors in having a successful SLC.

Our Freshman Academy will pilot the new schedule this school year with the rest of the school coming on board next year.

Discussion Questions:

1. What process do high schools use to develop & evaluate their schedule for the school? How might these processes hinder or encourage school staff buy-in?
2. What training will be necessary to help teachers understand the changes they need to make in the

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classroom?

3. What are key factors when considering scheduling that supports SLC planning?
4. How do schools use feedback and data to guide additional schedule improvements that will inform the whole school as they move to a new schedule?

**Avid Strategies School-Wide to Increase Rigor
And Entry To Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate**

Georgetown Salon A

Cherrie Smith, Student Advancement Coordinator, Highline School District, Seattle, Washington

The mission of Highline Public Schools is *educating every student and expect excellence*. Everything we do is focused on the ultimate goal of seeing each and every student graduate ready for college, career, and citizenship. To accomplish this goal, we strive to move students forward in rigorous classes, not hold them back in remedial classes. One of the ways to accomplish this goal is by using AVID strategies school-wide, and specific AVID elective classes with tutorial support to enable students to succeed in Pre-AP, AP and IB classes. This requires staff collaboration, vision, and professional development.

SLCs prepare students for AP/IB classes early...

- Cooperation and collaboration with middle schools
- Students placed in Pre-AP LA with AVID elective support
- Teachers are trained in AVID strategies school-wide
- Tutors trained and many times home-grown
- AVID Elective-trained teachers in many content areas
- ELL and AVID Elective classes

Discussion Questions:

1. How do SLCs work with feeder schools to prepare for rigorous classes?
2. How does a school staff decide what strategies should go school-wide?
3. How can a school or district grow a tutorial system to work beyond AVID?
4. What training do teachers need to step up 9th and 10th grade classes to prepare students for higher level classes in 11th and 12th grades?
5. Discuss how your district or school moves ELL students into rigorous classes.

**Creating and Supporting a College-
Going Culture within ALL SLCs**

Georgetown Salon B

Aaron Turner, Associate Director for SLCs, New York City Department of Education, New York

19 large SLC high schools in New York City are striving to achieve this goal! Building a college bound culture begins in the ninth grade. Schools with the greatest success utilize a scaffolded approach to specific activities, conversations, and experiences in grades 9-12. Implementing a college bound culture requires internal and external expertise, as well as access to various college and community partners. Equity and access must be at the heart of the work schools do to enable all students to be prepared for the rigors of college.



High Expectations begin when:

- Every SLC strives to connect every student to at least one adult
- Every student receives guidance on how to connect to a goal beyond HS
- SLC teams take the lead in connecting parents to the school
- All students are connected to an extracurricular activity

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the role of the guidance counselor change in the SLC structure to support a college going culture?
2. What strategies are appropriate for each grade level (i.e. how do we scaffold the work?)
3. Beyond college partnerships, what other partnerships are useful?
4. How do you include parents in this college-going culture?

Navigating the Maze of Master Scheduling

Georgetown Salon C

Nader Imad Twal, SLC Project Director, Long Beach Unified School District, Long Beach, California

Since the inception of wall-to-wall SLCs, many structural changes have had to occur to support this reform so that it translates into student achievement. Perhaps most challenging has been the effort to create a master schedule that is student-centered, while supporting critical elements of SLC success such as common conferences for teachers, and pure SLC classes. Millikan High School has created a particularly successful approach to designing a schedule that addresses these concerns and values shared input.

The master schedule is developed under the leadership of the Head Counselor, a Co-Principal, the SLC Coordinator, with valuable insight and periodic input from department heads and SLC Lead Teachers. Though the system has not been perfected and all SLCs are not equally established, the structure has been put in place to support this end.

Discussion Questions:

1. What has been your biggest hurdle in establishing a student-centered, SLC-appropriate master schedule? How has this been addressed?
2. What structural, instructional, and/or cultural changes need to happen at the school before a new approach to master scheduling can be meaningful?
3. To what degree should student choice of classes affect the design of master schedule?
4. Should SLCs have a defined course of study for each student with electives limited to ones relevant to a student's SLC theme? Why/why not?